

REMARKS

The office action of January 21, 2010, has been carefully considered.

It is noted claims 1 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph.

Claims 1-4, 6-11, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over JP 07-275920 to Fukaya et al.

In view of the Examiner's rejections of the claims, applicant has canceled claims 2, 6, 7 and 13, and amended claims 1 and 9.

With respect the rejection of claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, applicant submits that those skilled in the art would understand from the originally filed specification that only plasma descaling and/or plasma cleaning is intended since that is all that is discussed in the specification. Specifically, the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 24 specifically states: "Thus, the underlying objective of the invention is to create a method and a corresponding device for descaling and/or cleaning of a metal casting with which it is possible to efficiently and

effectively descale even wide metal castings over their entire width with consistent quality by means of plasma technology, wherein the economical as well as ecological advantages of this method should be utilizable." From this passage it is clear that only plasma descaling or cleaning is intended.

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph is overcome and should be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims presently on file differ essentially and in an unobvious, highly advantageous manner from the constructions and methods disclosed in the reference.

The reference of Fukaya et al. has been discussed at length in previously filed amendments and those comments are incorporated herein by reference. The following additional comments are provided.

The independent claims have been amended to be limited to only plasma descaling and/or plasma cleaning. Fukaya et al. on the other hand carry out sand blasting of the strip in addition to

descaling of the electrodes. Thus, the presently claimed invention is distinguishable from the teachings of Fukaya et al.

Furthermore, Fukaya et al. do not teach the unique arrangement of steps recited in amended claim 1 or the construction recited in claim 9. There is no teaching in the reference of any hot galvanizing, as is recited in the presently claimed invention. Nor is there any teaching of heating after descaling and/or cleaning and then galvanizing, as in the presently claimed invention. Additionally, Fukaya et al. do not teach exerting a tensile force of the magnitude recited in claim 1, in combination with the other recited steps.

The present invention provides a much higher quality galvanized steel strip than was possible in the prior art

In view of these considerations it is respectfully submitted that the rejection of claims 1-4, 6-11, 13 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over the above-discussed reference is overcome and should be withdrawn.


Reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

HM-625

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with this application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 21, 2010

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on May 21, 2010.

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Date: May 21, 2010